7: Thompson--363 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 621

"Laos is a ribbon of a country stretching from Cambodia to the Yunnanese frontier, and entirely dominated by the Mekong River. That great waterway is so imperfect a means of communication that the geographic diversity of the country and its peoples has free rein. Laos is covered with muongs or totally independent village groups. They have only been united under either a powerful neighbouring state like Siam or Cambodia, or when the two strongest among them--the principalities of Luang-Prabang and Vientiane--had kings energetic enough to achieve a confederation."

10: d'Orleans--258 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 131, 342, 361, 485

"Although the region called Laos has not, properly speaking, any clearly defined frontiers, we may consider that we have crossed the eastern boundary between Dien Bien and Sop Nao. Here the country changes, and we appear to enter a more civilised world; the houses are still based upon piles, but they are better built than those of the Thais, and they are arranged in regular lines on each side of a street; at the entrance an empty hostelry is ready for travellers."

10: d'Orleans--[illegible] [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 131

"The territory is not extensive; and although the frontiers are in many places not at all clearly defined, they may be stated approximately as follows: to the east the State of Luang Prabang begins, when descending the Nam-Ou, three or four days before the confluence of that stream with the Mekong, while it is a three days' journey down the latter southward to the frontier and twice as far northward before reaching the confines of Xieng Mai. To the westward, the frontier is not so far, being more or less nearly formed by the watershed of the Mekong and of the Menam, upon the borders of the principality of Nan. If measured by distance on the map, I think that one would not be far out were one to represent the kingdom of Luang Prabang as a square of about seventy-five miles."

23: Franck--271-272 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 131, 241, 311 Ethnic subgroup

"Sturdy enough in their natural habitat, they [EJ: of the 'Black Miao.'] must live at least three thousand feet above sea-level to be either happy or healthy, just as the Annamese must stick [272] to their miasmic rice-plains; and they never descend below that altitude if there is any way out of it. Of all the races of Indo-China the Miao are probably the most self-sufficient. In common with some other mountain tribes of Laos they burn off steep hillsides, normally every nine years, for their cultivation. When they need new fields to plant, they fell the biggest trees and set afire great patches of the jungle-forest, destroying wood and lumber enough to supply a large city for years to come. This burning is partly to drive off the blackleg fever and partly to give room for grass for their cattle; and as cinders make good fertilizer for a few years, their crops are abundant until it comes time to burn off another mountain-side. As this burning by patches has probably been going on for centuries, much of the Laos is not so forested as one expected to be, but often covered with those half-grown forests which the French call brousse. Yet with all the uneven growth there are many magnificent panoramas of densely forested ranges."

25: Brodrick--85 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 131, 489, 177.48 France
636.48

"The Laos was, and indeed still is, a country happy in its isolation. It is land quite difficult of access. There are no railways. There is only one all-weather road crossing the country and that in the Lower Laos. Moreover, in my day, at least, that is to say on the very eve of the last World War, you did not just start off for the Laos as you would for any other part of Indo-China, discreet inquiries were made. The French liked to keep their Laos uncontaminated by foreigners.(1)

1. The total area of the Laos is just under 90,000 square miles and the population, at the last census, was just over one million. There is no all-weather road right up the Mekong Valley and the highways from the east cannot be used during the rains except for that across the Lower Laos from Dong-Ha to Kabao. Much of the Laos is, therefore, except for air-communication, cut off from the outer world for at least five months out of every year."

"Route Coloniale No.13 runs northwards from Cambodia into the Laos country--the first home of the Thai-speaking immigrants from over the mountain in Yünnan (see p. 47) (3)

3. Route Coloniale No. 1 runs from the Siamese frontier to that of China.

The Laos country between the Annamese Chain and the course of the Mekong (with an extension over the right bank of the river in the north) is a land of mountains and deep valleys, of swift-flowing hill-streams. It borders on Tongking, Annam, Cambodia, Siam and Yünnan.

Although the Laos has a total area of 89,320 square miles (or more than one and a half times that of England), until a few years ago, this vast region, with a scattered population of less than one million, was almost inaccessible. [60] The Mekong was the only highway to the south, and arduous mountain-paths zigzagged through the jungle down to the littoral of Annam. In the wet season the Laos was isolated. In the last few years, however, not only has the 1000-mile long route coloniale No. 13 been completed, (1) but

1. The road runs from Cambodia and Saigon through Thakek and Paksé to Vientiane and thence to Luang-Prabang.

the Queen Astrid Highway (690 kilometres) has been cut from Vinh, on the coast of Annam, up and over the Annam Chain, and through the famous 'Plain of Jars' (2) to

2. The 'Plain of Jars' is dotted with hollowed megaliths formerly used as burial urns.

Luang-Prabang. Another road has been constructed from Vientiane to Vinh (282 kilometres) and among the subsidiary routes recently laid out is the so-called 'Benzoin Way' from Samneua to Moc-Chau (in Tongking) where it joins the road to Hanoi.

All these roads, however, are impracticable, or, at least, dangerous during the wet months (May to October) although route coloniale No. 13 is not impassable for most of the year. But communication between the Laos and the east (and that means with Hanoi, the capital of the Indo-Chinese Union) during the monsoon must be maintained by air."

28: Crawfurd -219-220 G-3 (1821) 1830 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kariang, the Lawá, the Ká, and the Chong, are wild and migratory races. The first and second of these are the same people who inhabit various portions of the Burman dominions. They are confined to the mountainous parts of Lao. The Ká, a term which in the [220] Siamese language means slave, but who are called by the Kambojans, Panong, inhabit the mountains of Lao, bordering upon Kamboja."

35; Ennis--1[3] H-3 (no date) 1936 Laotians
116, 131, 162

"Laos has 321,200 square kilometers, containing 420 French and 832,000 natives. It is the largest country of the group but contains the smallest number of people, as well as the most backward, on account of the lack of communication with the outside world."

68: Mouhot--85-86 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 131, 728, 631, 162, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"A great number of the inhabitants of this province [HD: i.e. Saraburi, in Siam] are natives of Laos, and are principally captives brought from Vien Chang after the insurrection there. The provinces of Boatioume and Petchaboune are peopled by Siamese, for Laos proper only commences at M'Lôm. Boatioume, Petchaboune, Sôm, and some other provinces in the north and east, are governed by Siamese mandarins of rank more or less elevated; that is to say, several of them have the power of life and death, and are [86]then considered as viceroys. The most distant provinces belong to the empire of Siam, and form a part of it."

114 To Messrs. Jules Bosc and Louis Finot for their teaching, their advice and their kind encouragement;

To Messrs. Georges Coedès and Paul Vitry for their precious information.

The reader will pardon the errors of this modest compilation. Since the great Pavie who, by the "Conquest of hearts," gave this world to France, this is the first attempt at a chronology of the Laotian principalities.

P. L. B.

/1/ A HISTORY OF FRENCH LAOS

000 Privileged corner of the earth, where manners have retained an exquisite simplicity, so rare among Asiatics, whose dominant characteristic is duplicity. My affection quite naturally went out to the Laotian people, so gentle, so peaceable and so trusting, whom gaiety never abandons, even in the worst misfortunes.

Captain Cupet, Mission Pavie
(Vol. III, p. 220).

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

131 The territory which is situated in the basin of the Mékong River and which is designated in the French Indo-Chinese Federation under the name of Laos, is included between 22° 30' and 13° 15' of north latitude and stretches from 97° 45' of longitude (the right bank of the Mekong) to 106° east of Paris.

Its political limits are: to the northeast Tonkin, to the north Chinese Yunnan, to the northwest /2/ the Anglo-Burmese State, to the west Siam, to the south Cambodia and to the east Annam.

131 654 Area. At present it is possible to give the colony's area only approximately. Any definite figure would run the risk of being incorrect, and indeed no complete triangulation has as yet been carried out. Laos, which is the last comer into the Indo-Chinese family and has neither sea frontiers, outlets nor an economic structure, is still isolated from the rest of the Union and is almost unknown outside the great valley of the Mekong. The labors of the officers of the Indo-

China Geographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of provinces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half that of France. 131 654

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According to information collected on the spot, the population must be between a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which estimate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain, the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of the Mékong. 161 /162/ 162

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massacred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopulated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and elephants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam. 162 166 648* 175

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan plateau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded mountains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133 133 137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne du Voyageur. 175* 114 /127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as 131 175*

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of persons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . . 421 433 161

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can 633 174 344

149: Reinach--28 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

4. The two Governments agree that commercial or other privileges and advantages conceded in the two Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Set-Chuên either to France or to Great Britain by virtue of their respective treaties with China of March 1, 1894, and June 20, 1895, and all privileges and advantages of any nature which may thereafter be conceded in the same Chinese provinces either to France or to Great Britain, shall, insofar as it depends on them, be extended and acknowledged to be common to both powers, their nationals and persons under their jurisdiction, and they agree to use their influence and good offices with the Chinese Government to this end.

5. This article relates to the Niger.

6. This article deals with negotiations to be undertaken in order to replace the present [38] general agreement with a new agreement responding to the intentions announced in the above articles.

Done at London on January 15, 1896.

(Signed) A. de Courcel.
(Signed) Salisbury

As a result of this declaration the territory of Muong-Sing was returned to us in March 1896, and from that time on French Laos was constituted as shall be described in the following chapters (1).

(1) It will be of the utmost interest, after this rapid résumé of the situation, to read Appendices XV and XVI which show in detail what our action was in the Mékong basin, and to compare what we intended to accomplish there with what the necessities of international policy enabled us to do.

[39] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER II

§ I--GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION--BOUNDARIES--EXTENT

Laos extends between 22° 30' N. latitude, somewhat below Muong-Kang (prefecture of S'sémao), and 13° 15' N. latitude, the latter being the parallel of Thboung-Kla, opposite Siem-Boc. Slightly to the east of this point, however, on the 105th meridian, the Laotian province of Darlac stretches a long point southwards to the 12th parallel.

131 Longitudinally it extends from 97° 45' (right bank of the Mékong at Xieng-Sèn) to 106° E. longitude in one point of [40] the Annamitic Chain bordering on the basin of the Srépok or Sé-Bang Khan.

The boundaries of Laos are (1):

(1) In what follows it will be necessary to consult the map of the Pavie mission, published by Challamel in Paris. There it will particularly be noted that Laos borders on Cambodia, Cochinchina and Annam all at once in the south.

a. FROM THE POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northeast, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï (Tonkin, province of Van-Bu);

648 2. In the north, Yun-Nan (prefecture of S'sémao);

3. In the northwest, the Anglo-Burmese Shan State of Xieng-Tong as far as Nam-Huok, slightly upstream from Xieng-Sèn;

4. In the west:

a) The Siamese Shan and Youn States of Xieng-Haï and Muong-Nan;

b) Siam itself (province of Outaradit);

c) The provinces which are tributary to Siam but which were placed in the zone of French influence by the London declaration of January 15, 1896; they are: Lao-Pou-Eûn, with its capital in Ban-Dua-Makeng; Lao-Kao, with its capital in Oubône; and the principality of Tiampa-Sac (Bassac);

d) Cambodia (province of Kompong-Thom);

5. In the south, the provinces of Kratié (Cambodia), Tayninh (Cochinchina) and Binh-Thuan (Annam);

6. In the east, Annam.

b. FROM THE PHYSICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northern region:

133 a) The watershed on the left side of the valley of the Nam-La, as far as the Mékong;

[41] b) The right bank of the Mékong, from its junction with the Nam-La to its junction with the Nam-Huok;

2. In the western region:

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133

a) The right bank of the Mekong, from its junction with the Nam-Huck to the foot of Pou-Padaï, somewhat downstream from the mouth of the Nam-Ngaou;

b) The crest of Pou-Padaï, then the boundary between the State of Muong-Nan and the Siamese province of Outaradit on the one hand, and the Laotian provinces of Muong-Houn-Sieng-Houn, Sagaboury, Outhaï-Thani and Kèn-Tao on the other, as far as the mouth of the Nam-Huong, but leaving the sources of the Ménam and of the Nam-Pat in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang (1);

(1) This frontier has been precisely defined for 150 years and is constituted by the following mountains: P. Padaï, P. Sakô, P. Dine-Deng, P. Kiou-Khating, P. Kha-Tang-Luong, P. Kiou-Mao, the plain called Na-Hon, P. Kheugne, P. Gniac, P. Kiou-Met, P. Koun-Houng, P. Pa-Thaï, P. Gnia-Mi, P. Koun-Tane, P. Kiou-Kang, P. Pouï, P. Lak-Mun, the streams of Houei-Noun and Houei-Kha, P. Liebp-Paï, P. Dou-Tong-Luong, P. Dou-Song-Tone (Houei-Song-Kouei), P. Tani, P. Pang-Nga, and finally the rivers Nam-Tane and Nam-Huong.

c) The right bank of the Mékong as far as Siemboc;

3. In the southern region:

A line starting at Thboung-Kla, following the Prek-Kadol and veering sharply south-southeast to include all the southern basin of the Srépok or Sébang-Khan and join the Annamitic Chain;

4. In the eastern region:

a) The crest line of the Annamitic Chain, which is also the watershed between the Mékong basin and those of the China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin. This line cuts the Attopeu road in Qui-Nhon between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak (2), the Savannakhèt road in Quang-Tri

(2) However, the valley of the Dak-Ayoun, a tributary of the Song-Ba, belongs to Laos.

at the gap of Lao-Bao (Aï-Lao) and the Pak-Hin-Boun road in Vinh at the ridge of Tram-Mua.

131
133

After following the valley of the Song-Ca to about the 102nd meridian, it turns northward, following the latter meridian approximately as far as the Song-Ma and leaving to Laos the [42] deep valleys of the Nam-Mo and Nam-Neun or Song-Ca. The left side of the Song-Ma then forms the limit between Tonkin and Laos as far as a point slightly beyond the Nam-Het. Then this limit follows the crest of Pou-Sang-Lam and moves northwest along the watersheds between the basins of the coastal rivers of Annam and the Mékong basin. It cuts across the course of the Nam-Ngoua, a subtributary of the Mékong, at Sop-Nao and then, with the same orientation, strikes the peak of Toung-Konang to the south of Muong-Lé (Chinese frontier). From this point the frontier takes a north-south direction and follows the peaks of the range which separates the waters of the Nam-Hou from those of the Nam-San (Lo-So-Kiang) and the Nam-Le. Then it moves northwest and strikes the junction of this latter river with the Mékong (1).

(1) The boundaries between Laos, Annam and Tonkin are still ill-defined, particularly in the case of the Hua-Pahn. Part of the latter, although of Thai race and language, was recently annexed to Annam. It will be seen that it is impossible to fix the limits of Laos in any more precise fashion.

The greatest length in a north-south direction measures approximately 1160 kilometers.

Because of the many bends which the Mékong makes between the 18th and 22nd parallels, Laos does not have a regular geometrical shape. There are very narrow parts and very wide parts. Thus, measuring distances parallel to the equator and as the crow flies, Laos is only about fifty kilometers wide in its northern extremity in the region of Muong-Hou. Somewhat further south, between Xieng-Sen and Thanh-Hoa, it is about 450 kilometers wide; from Luang-Prabang to Thanh-Hoa, about 230 kilometers; from Pak-Lay to the ridge of Tram-Mua, about 400 kilometers; from Pak-Hin-Boun to the ridge of Tram-Mua, about 120 kilometers; from Savannakhet to Ai-Lao, about 220 kilometers; from Khong to the

Annamitic Chain, about 300 kilometers; and finally from Thboung-Kla to the Chain, about 250 kilometers. Below this parallel, moreover, the territory of Laos ends in a strip of terrain about 150 to 200 kilometers wide (province of Darlac). The width of Laos thus varies between 50 and 450 kilometers approximately, giving an average width of about 250 kilometers. 131 133

[43] § II--AREA

It is not possible at present to give the exact area of the colony, since boundaries have not been fixed at certain points and the mountain ranges are scarcely known at all.

Any figure given can only be approximate, until such time as a complete triangulation makes it possible to calculate the area of the territory in precise fashion.

As of the present time, official sources agree that Laos has an approximate area of 267,700 square kilometers, that is to say:

Northern Laos	155,000
Southern Laos	112,000

This area is 49 percent of that of France (1). It is the largest

(1) Or approximately the area of Italy.

of the five countries which go to make up French Indo-China, and it is also the least populated.

§ III--OROGRAPHY

Taken as a whole, the Indo-Chinese mountain mass seems to be a ramification of the plateau of Tibet. Indeed, spurs jut out from from the latter in all directions, particularly from its southeastern extremity. These spurs form the vast plateau of Yunnan, and then stretch out to capes Négrais, Bolor, Bang-Pla-Soi and Padaran. 133

First there is the chain which forms the watershed between the Brahmaputra and the Irrawaddy (Arrakan-Yoma); then the peaks which form the watershed between the Irrawaddy and the Salouen on the one hand, and between the Salouen and the Ménam on the other (in the plateau of Ban the Malay peninsula springs out of this latter chain); then the folds which separate the Ménam from the Mékong and which are called Phom-Dangrek in Siam; and finally the high